

# POSTERIOR INSTABILITY REPAIR

Your Instructions After Surgery



SCAN FOR THE  
ONLINE VERSION



**Stanford**  
MEDICINE



## Medications

| MEDICATION                     | WHAT IT IS FOR                                                                                                               | HOW TO TAKE IT                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Acetaminophen (Tylenol)</b> | Baseline pain control                                                                                                        | 1,000 mg <b>every 8 hours</b> , on a schedule. <b>No more than 3,000 mg in 24 hours.</b>                |
| <b>Oxycodone 5 mg</b>          | Breakthrough pain not managed by other medications. Most people need it for the <b>first few days to week after surgery.</b> | 1 to 2 tablets <b>as needed every 4 to 6 hours.</b>                                                     |
| <b>Ondansetron (Zofran)</b>    | Nausea                                                                                                                       | As needed, as directed on the label.                                                                    |
| <b>Docusate (Colace)</b>       | Stool softener                                                                                                               | Take while you are taking oxycodone, as directed on the label.                                          |
| <b>Aspirin</b>                 | Blood clot prevention                                                                                                        | As directed for <b>2 weeks</b> , starting the <b>morning after surgery.</b>                             |
| <b>Anti-inflammatory</b>       | Pain and swelling                                                                                                            | May be an option for some patients. Take one only if Dr. Tummala recommends it and you can tolerate it. |

*Your medications may vary slightly from this list based on your current medications and health history. Any changes will be reviewed with you before surgery.*

### Example of a day in the first week

| TIME  | ACETAMINOPHEN | OXYCODONE                                        |
|-------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 8 am  | 1,000 mg      | Take 1 to 2 tablets as needed every 4 to 6 hours |
| 4 pm  | 1,000 mg      |                                                  |
| 12 am | 1,000 mg      |                                                  |

- **Acetaminophen is the base of your pain control.** Oxycodone is only for pain that breaks through.
- Tell us if you have a history of stomach ulcers, GI bleeding, kidney problems, or an NSAID allergy.
- Do not drive or drink alcohol while taking oxycodone.
- All medications are sent to your pharmacy. Pick them up before your surgery date or after surgery.
- If you had a **nerve block**, your arm will feel heavy and numb for many hours, sometimes more than a day. **Start your pain medication before the numbing wears off**, because it usually goes from numb to painful quickly.



### Sling

- Wear the **abduction sling** at all times for **3 weeks**, including while sleeping. It holds the arm slightly away from your body with the forearm facing forward, not across your stomach.
- Take it off only for your home exercises and bathing, and keep the arm in the same position when it is off.
- The sling protects the repair and is very important for success of healing.



### Dressing and Showering

#### Your incision care at a glance

##### Days 0 to 3

Keep the dressing **on and dry. No showering**; sponge bathe.

##### Day 3

Remove the dressing and **shower**. Put **clean, dry gauze** back on; change daily or when wet.

##### Day 5

Leave the incisions **open to air** if they are dry.

##### 4 to 6 weeks

Once fully healed, you may **soak** in a bath, pool, or hot tub.

- Under the dressing you may see some old blood and small white strips (steri-strips) over the incisions. Leave the steri-strips in place.
- When you shower, let soapy water run over the incisions. Do not scrub, and pat them dry afterward.
- To wash under the arm, lean forward at the waist and let the arm hang down in front of you. Do not lean to the side. A washcloth under the arm can make it more comfortable.
- Clean around the incisions with a clean washcloth and soap and water only. Do not put alcohol, lotion, ointment, or Neosporin on the incisions.
- Some blood-tinged or clear drainage is normal. If you see thick, yellow, pus-like drainage, send us a photo through the patient portal.



### Icing

- Ice at least **4 times a day for 20 minutes at a time**, especially for the **first 3 days**. Many patients continue beyond that if they find it helpful.
- Always keep a towel or cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Cold therapy unit: use as directed. If yours has compression, you may start the compression setting the day after surgery as pain allows.



### Physical Therapy

- For the first 3 weeks you do your home exercises only. Formal therapy begins at about **3 weeks**.
- You may go to any therapy clinic that is convenient for you. Book prior to surgery or as early as possible, and call to confirm your appointment.
- Bring the therapy protocol for your therapist.



### Sleep and Activity

- Sleep in a recliner or in bed with the arm supported on pillows **with the sling on**.



## Home Exercises

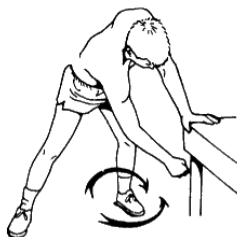
- Below are the home exercises for the **first 3 weeks** after surgery. Start the **day after surgery** and do the exercises below **3 to 4 times a day, for 5 to 10 minutes** each session.

## EXERCISE

## PICTURE

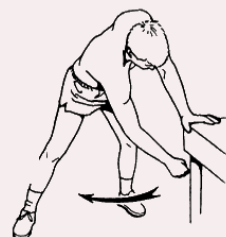
## HOW TO DO IT

## Pendulum circles



Lean forward and rest your good hand on a table. Let the operated arm hang straight down, relaxed. Rock your body weight in a circular pattern so the arm swings in a circle clockwise, then counterclockwise. Your body moves the arm; the shoulder muscles stay relaxed.

## Pendulum side to side



In the same position, gently rock your body weight from side to side and let the arm swing freely.

## Elbow bending and straightening



Sit with the arm supported at your side. With the palm up, then down, then thumb up, gently bend the elbow as far as you can, then straighten it as far as you can. Keep the shoulder still.

## Wrist bending



Actively bend the wrist forward, then backward, as far as you can.

## Hand and grip

Open and close the fingers fully. Squeeze a soft ball or rolled washcloth.

- Avoid any motion that causes a significant increase in pain. Put the sling back on when you finish.
- You may use your hand and wrist freely.
- For the first 3 weeks**, the shoulder moves only with your pendulum exercises. From 3 weeks, your therapist will add motion within limits that protect the repair.
- Do only the exercises Dr. Tummala or your therapist has given you.



## Motions to Avoid

- No lifting of any kind with the operated arm for the **first 6 weeks**.
- From **3 to 6 weeks**, do not raise the arm above shoulder height, and do not turn it inward past your stomach. Your therapist will guide how far you can move.
- Do not reach across your body for the **first 6 weeks**.
- No push-ups until **4½ to 6 months**. No throwing until **4½ months**, and no contact sports until **6 to 9 months**, and only once Dr. Tummala clears you.



Driving

- Not until you are out of the sling, off narcotic pain medication, and able to control the car comfortably with both hands. For most patients this is usually between **4 and 6 weeks**.
- If you are at all unsure whether you are safe to drive, do not for your safety.



Work

- You may return to work when you can do it within these restrictions including wearing the sling.
- Desk work is often possible within **2 to 3 weeks**.
- Jobs that need heavy physical labor usually take about **6 months**. Dr. Tummala will clear you based on your strength and motion, sometimes sooner and sometimes later.



Follow-Up

- Your first visit is **7 to 14 days after surgery** and should be scheduled before surgery. Stitches are removed and x-rays may be taken.
- Further visits are typically at about **6 weeks, 3 months, 4½ months, and 6 months**.



When to Call

- Clinic: **510-974-2800** (Stanford Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine, Emeryville).
- Fever above **101.5°F**, chills, or sweats. A low-grade temperature in the first 48 hours is common.
- Bleeding that has saturated the dressing twice.
- Excessive redness, a foul odor, or yellow or green drainage. Call the clinic if you are concerned.

- Pain that is severe and not controlled by your medication.
- A change in color of the hand or wrist.
- Constant cramping, tightness, or pain in either calf.
- Unable to eat, or unable to urinate for more than **1 to 2 days**.
- **Call 911** for chest pain, shortness of breath, or coughing up blood.

*This handout is for education only and does not replace medical advice. Always follow the instructions Dr. Tummala and the care team give you for your specific situation.*

NOTES AND QUESTIONS